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Swiss Bank Is Linked to Rebel Funds

\$200,000 for Contras Came From Account Controlled by North

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The Nicaraguan rebels' main military force received \$200,000 from a Swiss bank account controlled by fired National Security Council aide Marine Lt. Col. Oliver L. North, sources close to contra leader Adolfo Calero said last night.

Their statements were the first confirmation that the contras obtained money from a Swiss bank account that may also have received funds diverted from the secret Iran arms sales.

Calero, who heads the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), the contra military arm, was en route to Miami last night and could not be reached for comment.

In a brief telephone interview from Miami, Joe Portuondo, Calero's attorney, confirmed that FDN received two deposits totaling \$200,000 in late October 1985 from Lake Resources Inc.

The Tower review board said last week that millions of dollars in profits from the Iran arms sales were deposited in Swiss bank accounts in the name of Lake Resources, which was also controlled by retired Air Force general Richard V. Secord, a key figure in both the Iran arm sales and the contra aid effort.

It is not known whether the Swiss accounts in the name of Lake Resources had received any diverted Iran arms profits by October 1985, when funds were transferred to FDN accounts. North told Attor-

ney General Edwin Meese III that the idea of diverting money to the contras first surfaced in a conversation with an Israeli official in January 1986, according to the Tower report.

Earlier yesterday, Calero said the FDN received more than \$32 million in cash donations from anonymous sources during the two-year congressional ban on direct U.S. military aid to the contras, spending \$18 million to buy and ship weapons.

Portuondo said he recently discovered that FDN received funds from Lake Resources while reviewing the group's financial documents, which have been turned over to independent counsel Lawrence E. Walsh and congressional committees investigating the Iran-contra affair.

Portuondo said he informed Calero what he had found, but other sources said Calero did not realize Lake Resources was tied to North and Secord until yesterday afternoon. In an interview broadcast over CNN last night, Calero said he had just discovered the Lake Resources deposits.

Hours before, Calero had met with groups of reporters in Washington and had emphatically stated that there was no available evidence in FDN financial records showing that the group had received any diverted funds.

"I am showing you that what I am saying is the absolute truth. Here's the big money we got," Calero said. He said the FDN set up six bank accounts in Panama and the Cayman Islands to handle the cash that came from the anonymous donors.

He allowed reporters to look quickly at a thick stack of detailed FDN financial records of the bank accounts, which were opened under the corporate names of Alpha Service, S.A., Chester Co. and Dataguard International.

Calero, who appeared earlier this week for the second time before the federal grand jury investigating the Iran-contra affair, said the FDN re-

ceived nearly all its cash contributions between July 1984 and the end of March 1985. The secret Iranian arms sales did not begin until August 1985, when Israel shipped arms with U.S. knowledge.

The \$32 million figure is consistent with the Tower review panel's report, which cited evidence that the rebels received a similar amount from an unidentified foreign official, who supplied the funds in monthly deposits of \$1 million and \$2 million. A reliable source has told The Washington Post that the foreign official is Saudi King Fahd. The Saudi Embassy in Washington has repeatedly denied that its government gave money to the contras.

Calero said that he does not know the source of the \$32 million.

"When you are in the desert and you're dying of thirst . . . you don't ask if the water they're giving you is Schwepps or Perrier," said Calero, the former manager of the Coca-Cola plant in Managua. "And you don't ask if they have a case of it or two cases. You drink the damn thing. And that's what I was doing."

Once the FDN spent the \$32 million, he said, its largest single source of cash was more than \$1 million arranged by conservative fund-raiser Carl A. (Spitz) Channell, who worked closely with North in lobbying and raising money on behalf of the contra cause. Channell's fund-raising organizations are being investigated by Walsh.

Calero said that the money obtained through Channell and his related entities, including a tax-exempt foundation called the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty, went for food, clothing and other nonlethal items.

Calero, as he has in the past, acknowledged that Iranian arms sales profits could have been diverted to provide services to the contras, such as financing the air resupply operation based in El Salvador that was exposed when a cargo plane was shot down over Nicaragua last October, leading to the capture of American Eugene Hasenfus.

Calero said his group did not pay for the resupply operation, which

included a fleet of five planes, a Costa Rican airstrip and up to 25 employees. He said, however, that the FDN bought all the weapons carried by the resupply operation to contra forces.

Calero also confirmed that the arms purchased by the FDN during the ban were obtained through three intermediaries, including Secord and retired Army major general John K. Singlaub—who both worked closely with North. The third source, Calero said, was retired Army lieutenant colonel James L. McCoy, who works with Ronald J. Martin, a Miami arms broker long involved in Central America.

Secord provided the largest amount of weapons—between \$8 and \$9 million worth—mostly under the corporate name of Energy Resources International, S.A., which appears on the records displayed by Calero. Secord is described by the Tower panel as North's chief lieutenant on both the contra program and the Iran arms sales.

In mid-1984, when Congress appeared on the verge of cutting off aid to the contras, Calero said, a Nicaraguan-born attorney, Carlos Morales, helped him set up the three shell corporations in Panama and the bank accounts.

Calero said he gave the bank account numbers to North, Secord and Singlaub, and both Secord and Singlaub agreed to raise money for arms purchases. He said he has no idea whether Secord or Singlaub were behind the money FDN received.

Calero, in his meetings with reporters yesterday before he made the Lake Resources connection, said that he had left it up to subordinates to handle specific disbursements and deposits into FDN accounts. He said he had not examined FDN's financial records until recently.

"All I knew was the balance of our accounts, and I would be advised that money came in," Calero said.

Staff writer George Lardner Jr. contributed to this report.